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RESISTANCE AND NEGOTIATION IN TRANSLATING RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: A STUDY ON THE ARABIC TRANSLATION OF *GADIS KRETEK*

Muhamad Saiful Mukminin[1]*, **Sajarwa**[2]

[1] [2] Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The difference in religious cultural backgrounds encourages translators to make efforts to resist and negotiate when translating religious terms in literary works. Resistance focuses on preserving the original meaning, while negotiation adjusts the meaning to align with the target culture's understanding. Based on that translation strategy, this study analyzes the resistance and negotiation of religious identity in translating the novel *Gadis Kretek* into Arabic. Using a qualitative method with interpretative-comparative analysis, this research examines the religious identity in both the source and target texts, particularly through linguistic units representing religious terms. The data was taken from the novel *Gadis Kretek* and its Arabic translation *Fatātu al-Sajāir.* Data was collected by identifying religious terms in the texts, categorizing them according to an existing framework, and comparing their translations. The analysis focuses on the patterns of resistance and negotiation in translating these terms. The results reveal two primary patterns in the translation of *Gadis Kretek*. First, resistance, where religious terms are maintained in their original form or translated literally to preserve their sacredness. Second is negotiation, where adjustments are made to ensure the religious terms align with the target audience's cultural understanding. Resistance is influenced by the similarity of belief systems between Indonesian Islam and Arab Islam, while negotiation arises due to differences in cultural contexts. These findings contribute to understanding religious translation in multilingual Islamic contexts and offer strategies for culturally sensitive translation practices. This study concludes that translation serves as a cultural bridge, preserving the core meaning while adjusting it to the target context.

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* Corresponding author. Email: muhamadsaifulmukminin@mail.ugm.ac.id
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INTRODUCTION

The translation of religious identity is not merely a matter of language transfer, but a complex process involving resistance and negotiation. Religious identity is sensitive because it is closely tied to values, beliefs, and culture (Fung et al., 2018; Sugimura et al., 2019; Ysseldyk et al., 2010). In translation practice, translators often encounter texts laden with ideological and spiritual content (Simms, 1997), making it impossible to transfer every meaning directly without risking distortion (Naghmeh-Abbaspour et al., 2021; Prado & Rebechi, 2024; Belie & Tsegaye, 2022). Resistance arises when the translator retains original cultural elements or religious terms to preserve the authenticity of the message. Meanwhile, negotiation occurs when the translator must adapt meanings to be comprehensible to the target audience without compromising fundamental values (Afrouz, 2024; Haj-Yasin, 2025). These two processes highlight that translating religious identity is a discursive arena, where the source and target languages meet, each carrying its own social and cultural contexts. The translator acts as an intercultural mediator who not only conveys messages but also reinterprets religious identity within a new context (Barščevski, 2025; Khan, 2019; Motaghizadeh, 2017).

Resistance in translation occurs when the translator retains original terms or concepts deemed culturally or ideologically significant (Venuti, 1995). In the context of translating religious texts, resistance often manifests through preserving terms in the target language without complete translation. This approach safeguards original meanings that cannot be entirely transferred. Conversely, negotiation in translation emerges when the translator adapts terms or concepts to make them understandable to readers from different cultural backgrounds (Eco, 2003). This process requires compromise, such as providing semantic equivalents or additional explanations to ensure that the religious meaning is effectively conveyed. Religious identity is strongly reflected in religious terms, encapsulating unique values, teachings, and worldviews. Religious terms can be classified into several categories, including eschatology, moral and ethical criteria, religious artifacts, religious constructions, religious events, religious groups, religious personages, religious sites, religious activities, supernatural beings, terms of revelation, owner of religion, and religious commemoration (AlGhamdi, 2016; Mujazin et al., 2021; Yulianita, 2017). Therefore, the translation of religious terms is not neutral; it is laden with ideological significance and religious meaning.

The translation of religious identity has been examined through various approaches in previous studies. Some research has focused on the translation strategies used to render religious terms or concepts, as discussed by Watcharakaweesilp (2022), Wulandari et al. (2020), Zeghar (2021), ElShiekh (2016), and Ismoilova & Masharipova (2024). On the other hand, the quality of translation becomes the central concern in studies by Pamuji et al. (2021) and Yulianita et al. (2018), which assess the extent to which religious meanings can be accurately preserved. The teaching of religious identity translation has also received attention, as in the study by Alisherovna (2020), which highlights pedagogical methods for introducing cultural and religious sensitivity to prospective translators. Transliteration as an approach to translating religious terms is addressed by Hassan (2016), while the ideological issues in translation, shaping perspectives and choices of meaning equivalents, are examined by Feng & Junying (2016) and Mizher (2020). However, based on a review of this body of literature, there remains a notable lack of studies that specifically explore the processes of resistance and negotiation in translating religious identity. Nevertheless, these two aspects are crucial

for understanding the dynamics of meaning in cross-cultural translation, which is deeply embedded in values and ideology.

This study aims to examine the patterns of resistance and negotiation of religious identity in the Arabic translation of the novel *Gadis Kretek*. The novel incorporates elements of religious identity, reflected through Islamic values, moral teachings, and religious practices within the Indonesian cultural context. During the translation into Arab culture, these religious identity elements experience changes in both form and meaning. The differences in belief systems and religious concepts between the source culture (Indonesia) and the target culture (Arab) may lead to processes of resistance and negotiation in translation. This research focuses on how religious identity is transferred into the target culture and the extent to which equivalence of religious meaning is achieved. Accordingly, the study raises two key questions: First, what are the patterns of resistance and negotiation of religious identity in the Arabic translation of *Gadis Kretek*? Second, what factors influence these processes of resistance and negotiation? The findings are expected to provide insights into how religious identity is reinterpreted through cross-cultural translation and how religious meaning is negotiated within a different cultural context.

Cultural differences influence the meaning of religious identity because each culture carries distinct value systems, beliefs, and religious practices (Asiri et al., 2024; Edward, 2018; Halimah & Bosehah, 2025). Several studies related to the differences in religious terms across two cultures from a translation perspective have been conducted by Several studies related to the differences in religious terms across two cultures from a translation perspective have been conducted by Mukminin et al. (2025a) and Mukminin et al. (2025b). In translation or intercultural interaction, religious terms and symbols often have meanings that differ between the source and target cultures. These differences create challenges in transferring religious meaning accurately without losing its essence. Translators, for example, must navigate between maintaining fidelity to the original terms and adapting them to the understanding of the target culture (Nord, 2011; Onomejoh et al., 2024). In this process, religious identity reflected in terms or practices may undergo changes in meaning or even distortion to align with the new cultural norms. The interpretation of religious identity highly depends on the cultural context that shapes it. Therefore, cultural differences directly affect how religious identity is received and understood (Darginaviciene & Sliogeriene, 2019; Di, 2018; Romanova et al., 2021).

The findings of this study highlight the need for an investigation into the ways in which religious identity is contested and negotiated in the Arabic translation of *Gadis Kretek*, a novel deeply rooted in Indonesia's socio-religious context. An increasing number of people around the world are becoming interested in intercultural translation; nevertheless, there remains a dearth of research that investigates how religious beliefs are altered or preserved in translation. This gap is especially noticeable in translations that involve environments with a Muslim majority, which are situations in which religious identity plays a significant role in the process of meaning-making. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the ideological position of the translator by analyzing the tactics employed in translating religious aspects from Indonesian to Arabic. It illustrates the power dynamics that are ingrained in the development of texts that span across cultures. With its foundation in critical translation theory, this research makes a significant contribution to a deeper understanding of how translation functions as a site of negotiation and resistance. This work, therefore, makes an important contribution to the fields of translation studies and intercultural communication by providing current

scholarly insights into the depiction of religious identity in literary translation, particularly in the context of translation.

METHOD

For the purpose of this investigation, the data consist of linguistic units that are representative of religious identity, namely those realised through the use of religious terminology in the text. This religious identity is comprised of the values, practices, beliefs, and symbols of religion that are ingrained in Indonesian culture and are communicated through the language. The primary data sources for this study are the novel *Gadis Kretek* by Ratih Kumala (Kumala, 2012) as the source text (ST) and its Arabic translation titled *Fatātu al-Sajāir*, translated by Mohammed Ramadhan (Kumala, 2018), as the target text (TT). In addition to its popularity at both national and international levels (Rahayu et al., 2021), the novel was selected because it contains various representations of religious identity rooted in the socio-cultural life of Indonesian society. This religious identity is reflected through the use of religious terms that not only express individual beliefs but also collective values internalized in everyday social practices.

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach with an interpretive and comparative component. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen because it allows the researcher to deeply examine the phenomenon of translating religious identity through text-based data analysis. The comparative approach is applied to compare religious terms in the ST and their equivalents in the TT. This helps identify forms of resistance and negotiation of meaning in the translation. Meanwhile, the interpretative approach is used to interpret the symbolic, ideological, and cultural meanings embedded in the religious terms in the ST and how those meanings are re-represented in the TT. A straight borrowing of terms from the original text and a literal translation without any cultural adaptation are two examples of the linguistic indicators associated with the resistance strategy. A cultural adaptation involves the deletion of components that are irrelevant or sensitive in the context of the target audience, as well as other modifications to meaning that align with the norms and understanding of the audience. These modifications can be identified as part of the negotiating strategy in the meantime.

The data collection stage in this study was conducted through a structured and systematic process. First, both texts were closely read to understand the narrative context and emerging religious discourse. Second, linguistic units representing religious identity, based on the categorization by AlGhamdi (2016), Mujazin et al. (2021), and Yulianita (2017), were identified in the ST along with their equivalents in the TT. Third, the data were organized into a format that included excerpts from both the ST and TT, as well as the category of religious terms. Fourth, Arabic-language data were transliterated into Latin script to facilitate reading and linguistic analysis. Fifth, each item was assigned a sequential number to ensure organization and ease of reference during analysis. A methodical approach was employed in analyzing the data. Initially, the data were organized into categories based on the different types of religious identity representations. The second step was to examine the differences and similarities between the ST and the TT in order to find instances of resistance or negotiation. Regarding the third point, the investigation took into consideration linguistic, ideological, and cultural aspects. Conclusions were formed concerning translation tactics and the dynamics of the evolving negotiation of religious identity.

RESULT

The results present findings on religious identity, as represented through religious terms in the novel *Gadis Kretek* and its translation, *Fatātu al-Sajāir*. The data is presented in three parts, each focusing on a specific strategy and its corresponding cause. Both strategies are analyzed based on categories of religious identity, including terms, concepts, and religious expressions specific to Indonesian culture.

Strategy of Resistance in the Arabic Translation of *Gadis Kretek*

Table 1 shows the pattern of resistance, which refers to translation forms that preserve the source text's religious identity elements.

Table 1. Resistance Patterns in Translating Religious Identity

No	Source Text	Target Text	Religious Identity
1	*Terlihat Mas Tegar sedang menuntun Romo membisik kan nama-nama Allah Yang Mahabesar.* (Kumala, 2012:265)	فوجدنا تيجار يضع يده فوق رأس أبي، ويهمس بتسبيح أسماء الله، الله أكبر *Fa-wajadnā Tijār yadla'u yadahu fauqa ra'si abī, wa-yahmisu bi-tasbīch asmā' Allāh, Allāhu akbar*. (Kumala, 2018:287)	Owner of Religion
2	*Semua anak belajar membaca Quran di langgar.* (Kumala, 2012:52)	حيث تعلمها وهو صغير من القرآن الذي كان يحفظه في المسجد المجاور *Chaitsu ta'allamahā wa huwa shaghīrun min al-Qur'āni alladzī kāna yachfazhuhu fī al-masjidi al-mujāwir.* (Kumala, 2018:62)	Terms of Revelation
3	*Idroes Moeria pernah mendengar ramalan itu dari Kyai yang dia temui di langgar.* (Kumala, 2012:49)	سمع إدروس موريا ذات مرة عن نبؤة الشيخ في مسجد *Sami'a Idrūs Mūriyā dhāta marratin 'an nubu'ati asy-syaikh fī al-masjid.* (Kumala, 2018:59)	Religious Personages
4	*Ia membantu Kyai Idris, yang punya usaha dagang sepatu di pasar Kota.* (Kumala, 2012:190)	وعمل لدى كاي إدريس الذي كان بعمل في تجارة الأحذية في سوق المدينة *Wa 'amila ladā Kāy Idrīs alladzī kāna ya'malu fī tijārah al-achdziyah fī sūq al-madīnah.* (Kumala, 2018:205)	Religious Personages

In the category of resistance to religious identity, several terms were retained in the Arabic translation, either through literal translation or by preserving the original form from the source text. In the *Owner of Religion* category, the names of the *Nama-*

nama Allah Yang Mahabesar are translated as أسماء الله */asmā' Allāh/* and الله أكبر */Allāhu akbar/* (1), indicating an effort to preserve theological meaning directly. In the *Terms of Revelation* category, the word *Qur'an* is translated as القرآن */al-Qur'ān/* (2), maintaining both form and meaning commonly recognized in the Islamic context. For *Religious Personages*, there is variation in translating the word *Kyai*, which is rendered as الشيخ */asy-syaikh/* (3), a general term in the Arab Islamic world, and also retained as كاي */Kāy/* (4), to preserve the local term. Additional data on resistance patterns are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Resistance Patterns in Translating Religious Identity

No	Source Text	Target Text	Religious Identity
5	*Dulu, di Kudus ada Pak Haji Jamari. Dia hidup tahun 1880-an.* (Kumala, 2012:179)	منذ فتره طويلة في كودوس، كان هناك رجل اسمه السيد حاجي جماري، عاش في أواخر القرن الثامن عشر... *Mundzu fatrah thawīlah fī Kūdus, kāna hunāka rajulun ismuhu as-Sayyid Chājjī Jamārī, 'āsya fī awākhir al-qarni al-tsāmin 'asyar...* (Kumala, 2018:191)	Religious Personages
6	*Ia bangun, salat sunat fajar, dilanjutkan salat Subuh.* (Kumala, 2012:69)	كان قد استيقظ مبكرًا وأدى صلاة الصبح *Kāna qad istaiqazha mubakkiran wa addā shalāta ash-shubchi* (Kumala, 2018:75)	Religious Activities
7	*Adzan Magrib berkumandang, Mak Iti' berpesan* (Kumala, 2012:115)	أعطاها موريا السجائر بينما كان أذان المغرب يملأ الأفق *A'thāhā Mūriyā as-sajā'ir bainamā kāna adzān al-maghrib yamla'u al-ufuq* (Kumala, 2018:118)	Religious Activities
8	*Yang pasti, pada satu Lebaran aku mengunjungi Mbah Djagad, rumah tersebut berubah sepi.* (Kumala, 2012:242)	لكنني أتذكر كيف في أحد الأعياد زرت جَدِّي هنا وكان المنزل مهجورا نوعًا ما *Lākinnanī atadzakkaru kaifa fī achadi al-a'yādi zurta jaddī hunā wa kāna al-manzilu mahjūran naw'an mā* (Kumala, 2018:259)	Religious Commemoration
9	*Album itu didapatnya dari sebuh pesta yang mengundang band yang konon memuja*	ألبوم اشتراه في أحد الحفلات الترويجية لفرقة يقال أن أعضاءها من عبدة الشيطان *Albūm isytarāhu fī achadi al-*	Supernatural Beings

	setan tersebut. (Kumala, 2012:26)	*chafalāti at-tarwījiyyah li-firqah yuqālu inna a'dlā'ahā min 'abidati asy-syaithān* (Kumala, 2018:36)

The term *Haji* is translated as حاجي /*Chājjī*/ (5), still referring to the religious title given after performing the pilgrimage. In the *Religious Activities* category, terms like *salat Subuh* and *adzan Magrib* are translated as صلاة الصبح /*shalāta ash-shubchi*/ (6) and أذان المغرب /*adzān al-maghrib*/ (7), still referring to widely recognized ritual terms in Islam. In the *Religious Commemoration* category, the term *Lebaran* is translated as الأعياد /*al-a'yādi*/ (8), indicating a generalization of meaning as a religious holiday. Meanwhile, in the *Supernatural Beings* category, the term *Setan* is translated as الشيطان /*asy-syaithān*/ (9), preserving the concept of an evil being as known in Islamic doctrine.

Strategy of Negotiation in Arabic Translation of *Gadis Kretek*

Table 3 below illustrates the negotiation pattern, which refers to translation forms that undergo adaptation, meaning shifts, or adjustments in response to the Arab cultural context as the target audience.

Table 3. Negotiation Patterns in Translating Religious Identity

No	Source Text	Target Text	Religious Identity
10	*Telah pula disuruhnya pemuda itu untuk beristikarah, minta petunjuk pada Yang Kuasa.* (Kumala, 2012:69)	حتى أنها سألت ابنها أن يصلي لاستخارة الله *Chattā annahā sa'alat ibnuhā an yushalliya li-istikhārat Allāh.* (Kumala, 2018:75)	Owner of Religion
11	*Idroes Moeria pernah mendengar ramalan itu dari Kyai yang dia temui di langgar.* (Kumala, 2012:49)	سمع إدروس موريا ذات مرة عن نبؤة الشيخ في مسجد قريب *Sami'a Idrūs Mūriyā dhāta marratin 'an nubu'ati asy-syaikh fī masjid qarīb.* (Kumala, 2018:59)	Religious Constructions
12	*Ketika Idroes Moeria mendengar kabar bahwa Belanda sudah pergi, dan saudara tua yang disebut orang sebagai Jepang datang, Idroes Moeria sujud syukur.* (Kumala, 2012:52)	عندما سمع إدروس موريا أن الهولنديين قد غادروا البلاد، وأن أمة الأخ الأكبر التي يسمونها اليابان قد جاءت إلى إندونيسيا شعر بالكثير من السعادة *'Indamā sami'a Idrūs Mūriyā anna al-Hūlandiyyīn qad ghādarū al-bilād, wa anna ummata al-akh al-akbar allatī yusammūnahā al-Yābān qad jā'at ilā Indūnīsiyā sya'ara bil-katsīr min as-sa'ādah.* (Kumala, 2018:62)	Religious Activities

In negotiating religious identity, translations involving meaning adjustments were found to bridge cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target texts. In the *Owner of Religion* category, the term *Yang Kuasa* is translated as الله */Allāh/* (10), indicating a simplification and alignment of the concept of divinity with more universal Islamic terminology. In *religious constructions*, the word *langgar* is translated as مسجد قريب */masjid qarīb/* (11). Although it functionally refers to a place of worship, it undergoes a shift in meaning from a local context to a more general form. In *Religious Activities*, several forms of meaning negotiation occur. *Sujud syukur* is translated as شعر بالكثير من السعادة */syaʿara bil-katsīr min as-saʿādah/* (12), reflecting an emotional expression rather than a ritual meaning. Other data on negotiation patterns can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Negotiation Patterns in Translating Religious Identity

No	Source Text	Target Text	Religious Identity
13	*Suatu keajaiban lelaki muda itu masih hidup hingga sekarang, pasti dia melewati berpuluh-puluh kali selametan yang terpaksa digelar orang tuanya.* (Kumala, 2012:52)	خمّن موريا أن والديه قاما بالعشرات من طقوس الخلاص لكي يأملا أن يكمل ابنهما حياته مع هذا الاسم الغبي *Khammana Mūriyā anna wālidaihi qāmā bil-ʻasyarāti min thuqūsi al-khalāsh li-kai yaʾmalā an yukmila ibnuhumā chayātahu maʿa hādzā al-ism al-ghabī.* (Kumala, 2012:62)	Religious Activities
14	*Ia bangun, salat sunat fajar, dilanjutkan salat Subuh.* (Kumala, 2012:69)	كان قد استيقظ مبكرًا وأدى صلاة الصبح *Kāna qad istaiqazha mubakkiran wa-addā shalāta ash-shubchi.* (Kumala, 2018:75)	Religious Activities
15	*Lalu, pagi-pagi setelah adzan Subuh berkumandang, Mak Iti' pamit pulang untuk sorenya akan datang kembali,* (Kumala, 2012:115)	في صباح اليوم التالي باكرًا أخبرتهما ماك أتي أن عليها أن تعود لبيتها بعد الظهيرة وسوف تعود مع المساء *Fī shabāchi al-yaumi at-tālī bākiran akhbarat-humā Māk Itī anna ʿalaihā an taʿūda li-baitihā baʿda azh-zhahirah wa-saufa taʿūdu maʿa al-masāʾ.* (Kumala, 2018:119)	Religious Activities
16	*Tirakatan pun dimulai.* (Kumala, 2012:146)	بدأت عملية الصوم وتقديم القرابين *Bada'at 'amaliyyah ash-shaum wa taqdīm al-qarābīn.* (Kumala, 2018:152)	Religious Activities
17	*Mak Iti' menyuruh Idroes Moeria mengumandangkan adzan di telinga bayi*	أخبرت ماك أتي إدروس موريا أن عليه أن يُكبِّر في أذن طفلته الصغيرة الحمراء *Akhbarat Māk Itī Idrūs Muriyā anna*	Religious Activities

	merah tersebut. (Kumala, 2012:104)	*'alaihi an yukabbira fī udzun thiflatihi ash-shaghīrah al-chamrā.* (Kumala, 2018:108)	
18	*Suaranyalah yang benar-benar membangunkan orang orang kampung sehingga terpaksa melek dan bergegas mengambil air wudhu.* (Kumala, 2012:103)	جعلهم صوتها يتقلبون في سرائرهم لكي يقوموا من نومهم من أجل الصلاة *Ja'alahum shautuhā yataqallabūna fī sarā'irihim likai yaqūmū min naumihim min ajli ash-shalāh.* (Kumala, 2018:107)	Religious Activities

Selametan is translated as طقوس الخلاص */thuqūsi al-khalāsh/* (13), offering an interpretation as a ritual of salvation or safety. *Salat sunat fajar* (14) and *adzan subuh* (15) are untranslated, neglecting specific religious terms. *Tirakatan* is translated as عملية الصوم وتقديم القرابين */'amaliyyah ash-shaum wa taqdīm al-qarābīn/* (16), as a form of cultural adaptation aligning local practices with more recognizable ritual concepts in the Arab context. Meanwhile, *mengumandangkan adzan* is translated as يُكبِّر */yukabbira/* (17), which narrows the meaning to *takbir*, and *mengambil air wudhu* is translated as أجل الصلاة */ajli ash-shalāh/* (18), referring to the purpose of worship without explicitly naming the practice. These patterns demonstrate meaning negotiation in the translation process, where local meanings are compromised or adapted to suit the cultural understanding of the target audience.

Causes of Resistance and Negotiation Strategies in the Arabic Translation of *Gadis Kretek*

The similarity in belief systems between the source culture (Indonesian Islam) and the target culture (Arab Islam) is a key factor that encourages the translator to retain religious terms already theologically recognized. This is evident in data (1), (2), (3), (6), (7), (8), and (9), which are not only widely understood by Arab readers but also hold sacred meanings, thus requiring no substitution of form or cultural equivalence. This shared understanding enables the translator to resist altering the form or meaning, thereby maintaining fidelity to the original message. Moreover, the historical fact that Islam entered Indonesia through merchants and scholars from the Arab world reinforces the linguistic and theological connections between the two cultures (Shofura et al., 2024). Many Islamic terms used in Indonesia are directly derived from Arabic (Mahfud et al., 2022), so when translating into Arabic, these terms can be reused without changing their essential meaning. Additionally, as Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world (Kato, 2021), Islamic culture plays a dominant role in the daily life of its people. Therefore, the translator has a strong basis for fully retaining religious terms out of respect for religious values and to ensure clarity of meaning for the target readers, who also share an Islamic background.

Preserving the original form in translating religious terms is chosen to maintain the sacredness and authenticity of meaning, especially for terms that possess deep theological significance and hold a sacred position in Islam. This is evident in data (4)

and (5). These two terms are not translated freely because they carry strong theological meaning and are already embedded in the understanding of Muslims in Indonesia. Furthermore, resistance is also observed in the case of the term *Kyai*, which is translated using two strategies: employing the general equivalent الشيخ /*asy-syaikh*/, which is easily recognized by Arab readers, and retaining the local form كاي /*Kāy*/ to preserve Indonesian cultural identity. In Indonesian culture, a *Kyai* is an Islamic religious figure who is highly respected for his knowledge, wisdom, and central role in guiding the community, particularly in the context of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) education (Anita et al., 2022; Ivanto & A'la, 2024). This dual strategy reflects a conscious effort to preserve local values while ensuring comprehensibility within the target culture. Thus, resistance to translating religious terms is not merely about maintaining linguistic form; it also represents a form of safeguarding religious meanings considered important and sacred, ensuring they are not distorted in translation.

The factor that causes negotiation in the translation of religious identity is closely related to the cultural context differences between Indonesian and Arab societies. The difference in cultural structures causes the meaning of rituals or practices to shift in order to align with the meaning system in Arab culture. In Indonesian culture, religious practices such as *selametan* and *tirakatan* are not only spiritual but also rich in social, cultural, and local meanings. *Selametan* is a communal thanksgiving that reflects social harmony (Maharani, 2021; Rohman et al., 2023), while *tirakatan* is a spiritual practice performed either individually or collectively, usually before significant events (Adnan & Uyuni, 2022; Sutarno et al., 2023). When translated into Arabic, the meanings of these two practices are adjusted to be more easily understood in the Arab cultural context. *Selametan* is translated as طقوس الخلاص /*thuqūsi al-khalāsh*/ (ritual of salvation), while *tirakatan* becomes عملية الصوم وتقديم القرابين /*'amaliyyah ash-shaum wa taqdīm al-qarābīn*/ (the process of fasting and offering sacrifices). This translation aims to adapt the meaning to align with the religious experiences recognized by Arab readers, albeit at the expense of reducing the social-cultural aspects inherent in the original terms. Thus, negotiation occurs as a form of meaning compromise, considering cross-cultural understanding while avoiding misunderstandings of religious terms that lack direct equivalents.

Several religious terms in the translation have been adjusted to align with the understanding of Arab society, making them more easily comprehensible within their cultural and theological context. For example, the term for performing ablution is translated as أجل الصلاة /*ajli ash-shalāh*/, meaning "for prayer," which simplifies the understanding of the ablution ritual into a more general concept of worship. Additionally, *sujud syukur* (prostration of gratitude) is translated as شعر بالكثير من السعادة /*syaʿara bil-katsīr min as-saʿādah*/, which literally means "feeling great happiness," replacing the ritual meaning with an emotional expression more familiar to the Arab community. As for "The Almighty," the translation becomes الله /*Allāh*/, simplifying the broader Indonesian term into a universal equivalent in Islam. This translation aims to adapt the meaning to align with the well-established belief systems and practices prevalent in Arab culture, while preserving the essence of the original term. This approach mirrors the negotiation process between the two distinct cultures, adapting the meaning to be more easily accepted and understood in accordance with the traditions and religious teachings of Arab society.

DISCUSSION

The strategy of resistance in translation can be linked to Venuti's (1995) concept of *foreignization* emphasizes the importance of preserving the original cultural elements of the source text. This approach serves as a counter to the tendency of overly adapting texts to the target culture, which may blur the cultural identity of the original. In contrast, the negotiation strategy aligns with *domestication*, prioritizing the adaptation of the text to be more familiar to the target audience. This approach sacrifices certain elements of the source culture for the sake of readability and broader acceptance. Furthermore, Vermeer's (1994) *Skopos theory* provides a methodological foundation for choosing translation strategies. The theory states that the purpose of translation (*scopos*) determines the approach used, including whether the translator opts for resistance or negotiation. In this context, strategy selection is not merely linguistic, but also connected to the communicative purpose and social function of the translated text.

The findings of this study demonstrate relevance and continuity with two previous studies, Mukminin et al. (2025a) and Mukminin et al. (2025b), both of which discuss the issue of religious identity negotiation in translation. Generally, all three studies focus on religious identity as a central aspect of the translation process. However, significant differences in the negotiation aspects and the types of texts or objects studied highlight the novelty of the current research. The study of Mukminin et al. (2025a) investigates the translation of a classical Islamic text into English. While it shares a focus on religious identity, it differs in the object of study (religious scripture vs. literary novel) and the direction of negotiation. Meanwhile, the study of Mukminin et al. (2025b) also examines Islamic identity in translation, specifically within film media. The similarity lies in the theme of religious identity negotiation, but notable differences emerge in the type of media (film versus novel) and the approach employed in negotiation.

In relation to previous scholarship, this study's findings demonstrate continuity and divergence. Similar to the observations of Watcharakaweesilp (2022), Wulandari et al. (2020), Zeghar (2021), ElShiekh (2016), and Ismoilova & Masharipova (2024), the Arabic translation of *Gadis Kretek* shows that translators employ various strategies to render religious identity markers. However, this study proceeds by framing these strategies in terms of resistance and negotiation, offering a more nuanced account of how ideological and cultural dynamics shape translation. While earlier works highlight the mechanical or procedural aspects of religious translation, this research underscores the translator's agency in balancing Indonesian Muslim specificity with pan-Arab Islamic norms. In this way, the study situates translation not merely as a transfer of terms but as a site of cultural contestation, adding depth to the broader discourse on religious identity in translation.

Furthermore, this study complements and extends discussions on translation quality, pedagogy, and ideology found in the works of Pamuji et al. (2021), Yulianita et al. (2018), Alisherovna (2020), Hassan (2016), Feng & Junying (2016), and Mizher (2020). While those studies evaluate the accuracy of meaning preservation, explore transliteration practices, or reveal the influence of ideology, the present research advances the field by explicitly analyzing how resistance and negotiation operate as dynamic processes within literary translation. This perspective highlights the ideological choices underlying the preservation or adaptation of religious identity, revealing subtleties that accuracy-based or pedagogical approaches often overlook. By demonstrating how Indonesian Muslim identity is either retained or transformed in the Arabic version of *Gadis Kretek*, the study contributes a fresh dimension to ongoing

debates, positioning resistance and negotiation as key concepts for understanding the interplay of religion, culture, and translation.

Although preserving Arabic-origin terms in translation may enhance theological clarity for the target audience, this strategy potentially erases the distinctive local religious expressions present in the source text. This could lead to the risk of cultural homogenization, where the contextual diversity of religious meaning is overshadowed by the dominance of universal interpretations associated with the target culture. On the other hand, negotiation strategies that involve adapting rituals or adjusting meanings to fit the target culture may dilute the social meaning and symbolic value of religious practices in the original text. Consequently, meanings that were once sacred and contextually grounded may become generic and superficial. Therefore, translation strategies should consider both readability and semantic equivalence, as well as their impact on cultural identity and the preservation of local meaning within cross-cultural communication.

The research reveals that religious terms are not merely linguistic elements, but also markers of cultural and ideological identity. The findings contribute to translation studies by highlighting how resistance strategies preserve theological meanings across languages, challenging the dominance of neutral or domesticated approaches. In literature, the study emphasizes the role of translation in maintaining cultural authenticity within narrative texts. Culturally, it affirms the importance of preserving local religious expressions in upholding identity when engaging in global discourses. This research informs translators, educators, and media practitioners about the ethical and cultural implications of translation choices, particularly in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Thus, this study bridges the realms of language, religion, and identity, offering a critical perspective on how translation operates not only as a means of communication but also as a cultural negotiation and ideological positioning in society.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that in the translation of religious identity in the novel *Gadis Kretek* into Arabic, two main patterns emerge: resistance and negotiation. The resistance pattern is evident in the categories of owner of religion, terms of revelation, religious personages, religious activities, religious commemoration, and supernatural beings, where religious terms are maintained in their original form or translated literally to preserve the sanctity and authenticity of their meanings. The underlying factor for this resistance is the similarity in belief systems between the source culture (Indonesian Islam) and the target culture (Arab Islam), which encourages the translator to retain the theologically recognized terms. In contrast, the negotiation pattern occurs in the categories of owner of religion, religious constructions, and religious activities, where some religious terms are adjusted to align with the cultural understanding of Arab society for easier comprehension. The factor driving this negotiation is the cultural context difference between Indonesian and Arab societies, which necessitates a shift in meaning to adapt religious practices and understandings to the Arab culture. Both patterns demonstrate how translation serves as a bridge between two cultures, preserving important meanings while adapting them to a new context.

The limitations of this study lie in its scope, which only covers the translation of religious terms from Indonesian to Arabic within the context of Islamic culture. This research is limited to data from specific texts, so the results may not encompass the full

diversity of religious term translations across all literary works or other religious texts. Furthermore, the analysis focuses on two translation patterns (resistance and negotiation), without considering other factors that might influence the translation, such as the translator's purpose or a broader target audience. For future research, it is recommended that the scope be expanded to include more texts or diverse works, such as those from various genres, and incorporate additional languages and cultures. Research could also explore the influence of social and political contexts on the translation of religious terms and examine translation within the context of increasingly prevalent digital or social media.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author designed the research idea and concept, conducted data collection, and analyzed the data to draft the article. The second author provided useful suggestions and input during the research process, ensuring the completeness and quality of the analysis, and offered critical perspectives for refining the article.

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AUTHORS' SHORT BIODATA

Muhamad Saiful Mukminin is a Master's student in Linguistics at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His research focuses on linguistic studies and cross-language translation, including Arabic, English, Indonesian, and Javanese. Email: muhamadsaifulmukminin@mail.ugm.ac.id.

Sajarwa is a senior lecturer and researcher in the French Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. He has been engaged in translation, French literature, and language studies. Email: sajarwa@ugm.ac.id.